38: Dobell--24-27 G-2 (1812-13) 1830 Yakut-1-3
116, 435, 437, 475

"There must also be a great deal of improper management, to say the least of it, in the purchase of flour, the transportation of it, packing, &c. &c. which I cannot pass over in silence, as it really calls for strict examination. A pood of flour that costs only fifty to sixty kopecs at Irkutsk, and is generally sold at Yakutsk at a rouble to a rouble and a half, stands the Government, by the time it arrives at Ochotsk (one thousand and twelve versts), nearly ten roubles per pood. To carry five poods and thirty pounds of this flour to Ochotsk, contracts are made with the Yakuts at eighty or eighty-five roubles, and sometimes more, per horse; this being a horse's load. Now I have been confidently informed, that the Yakuts seldom receive much more than one half of that sum; the rest being divided amongst the officers of Government! There is also much to be altered in the manner of transporting the flour on the Lena and to Ochotsk. Flour is generally sent down the Lena in large square flat-bottomed vessels called barques, in bulk; and, as it is often badly dried, it heats, becomes bitter, and loses much of its nutritious quality. When it arrives at Yakutsk it is thrown into magazines, also in bulk, where it becomes [25] further heated, and is more or less spoiled. (1) If it were sent in

1. As I have been three times at Yakutsk, and lived there once for ten months, the reader will perceive that I speak of those matters from my own experience.

bags from Irkutsk it would be much better preserved, and the additional cost would be trifling, as the bags would serve many years in succession. At Yakutsk the flour is packed into leathern bags, called sumas, made of ox-hides untanned, but dressed white, and the hair taken off. To pack the flour into them tightly, so that each suma shall contain two poods and thirty-five pounds, it is necessary to wet them; the flour that adheres to the wet suma dries and becomes as hard as a stone, and is thus rendered impenetrable to all sorts of weather; so that if the suma be good there cannot be a safer mode of conveying the article; but unfortunately the sumas that are now contracted for at about two roubles and a half a-piece, are so thin and bad, that the flour often spoils, and the sumas only serve for a season or two, instead of lasting four or five years, as was formerly the case. It would be cheaper to pay five roubles for a good strong suma, that would last several years, than to buy such trash because it is cheap. However, it would of course [26] prove less profitable to the parties concerned, if the sumas were good and the contracts fewer. During five years residence in Kamtchatka, I paid from eleven and a half to twelve roubles and sixty kopecs a pood for the rye-flour I consumed; and I never saw a suma that was not either bitter-flavoured, tasting of the leather, or having sand mixed with it. One additional cause, however, of the spoiling of the sumas must be mentioned, because it proceeds from neglect. That there are rats in the magazines at Ochotsk and Kamtchatka arises from their not having been properly built. The floors and ceilings should be either composed of solid square

birch logs, laid close together, or else lined with sheet-iron. Either of these methods would effectually keep out the rats; but neither will be adopted at Kamtchatka as long as the Government is in the habit of allowing ninety poods of flour (1) annually for the

1. I have since heard that the Government of Irkutsk has at length refused to allow rations to the rats of Kamtchatka.

consumption of those animals, many of whom I believe, if the truth were known, have only two legs! Their getting into the transports is owing to the neglect of the commanders, who do not take the [27] necessary precautions to prevent them; or if they get in, surely a good smoking would destroy them in a few hours. If there were not a great deal of improper management and bad conduct, surely the flour might be carried cheaper and be sold for much less than twelve roubles and sixty kopecs at Kamtchatka."

44: Gilder --179 J-2 (1882) 1883 Yakut
116, 252, 262, 435

"All the lakes and rivers abound with most excellent fish, and the poorer classes eat nothing else. My observations here have led me to doubt the brain-producing character of a fish diet, or else that the fish here are of the right sort for that purpose. I can, however, attest the excellent quality of the fish, especially raw and frozen. In that case the skin is stripped off and long slices cut longitudinally from the fish, and eaten with or without salt, as the taste or means of those who eat may dictate. When eaten thus it is called by the Russians 'struganina,' and by the Yakouts 'tung bullok.' When cooked it is boiled, fried, baked or made into pie or biscuit. Reindeer meat is also eaten by those who can afford it, unless rich enough to eat beef, which they prefer, though why I could never discover, for the meat of the reindeer is much more delicate and tender, and has a peculiarly delicious flavor, probably derived from the fragrant moss that constitutes its food. It is cheap enough to satisfy the most economical housekeeper, a fine fat buck, entire, costing at Nishne Kolymsk only three roubles--that is, a dollar and a half--and at Sradnia five roubles. The meat of the reindeer is always excellent, while the beef is usually coarse grained and tough. At Nishne and Sradnia beef is more expensive than reindeer, at Werchojansk they cost about the same, while at Yakoutsk reindeer meat is the most expensive, and is only exceeded in price by the horse, which is a luxury only to be indulged in by the rich. It is a luxury, I believe, chiefly prized by the Yakouts, though I understand that it is served at the restaurants in Yakoutsk to those who desire it."

49: Findeisen -- 10 [2] E-1 (no date) 1930 Yakut
116 435, 439, 543, 609

Shimkevich calls the Yakuts real parasites of the Tunguses. In his German travel account, he says: "Twice a year, on Easter and Christmas, they hold markets in the forests, where the Tunguses will find everything they need: reindeer, powder, shotguns, clothes, sugar, butter. They usually become indebted to the Yakuts and cannot get rid of them any more. The Yakuts follow them and sell their goods at a terribly high price. In Middendorg's time, i. e. in 1844, there were 26 traveling Yakut merchants; today there are more than 60 of them. In such a market which was held in the vicinity of the gold washing plants of the Niman company, 20 merchants bought furs from 100 native families which were present; the furs had a value of 124,000 marks, but the natives were sold goods worth 80,000 marks instead. But the Tunguses had still a debt of about 160,000 to the tradesmen. The goods included 3000 sable-furs worth 36 marks each, 1300 musk-rat, squirrel, fox and bear furs, etc. The Tunguses bought 1086 reindeer, including 684 beasts of burden at a price of 80 to 120 marks, and 250 to 300 saddle-reindeer worth 200 to 240 marks each. 24,000 pounds of cow's butter which the Yakuts had bought along on their reindeer were sold at one mark a pound, 400 pounds of other fat at 80 pfennigs, and various other goods at 4000 marks."

In another place, he says: The market held annually near the Niman gold washing plants has replaced all others previously held. The natives then come together from all sides and from far places, and the Yakut merchants make good business. The Yakuts are not only good merchants, they are good hunters, too.

/184 cont./

224 caught in traps, but is also dug out of its den, as we ourselves had
[435] an opportunity to observe on our return journey. The price of a good skin here yields on the average about a ruble, but many different kinds are distinguished according to quality, and the poorer ones are valued at only half a ruble; the winter pelts are, of course, the best. The highly prized blue variety of the arctic fox seems
[651] to be practically unknown here. The crown tax as well as the goods purchased from the merchants are paid for with the skins of the arctic fox.

[543] Around Easter a kind of annual fair is held here, at which appear both the inhabitants of the islands lying in front of the mouth of the Olenék and those from the nearest settlements of the forest region, in order /185/ to trade skins for the necessary commodities
[571] from the traders -- tobacco, tea, cloth, ironware, etc. Despite the inhospitable climate the people here seem to be well off and
[512] very content. Even during the dark months they go about their
[132] activities out in the open, especially fishing, and only about the time of the reappearance of the sun, around the Day of the Holy Three Kings (sixth of January, old style), when the most frightful snowstorms set in, do they shut themselves up completely -- often
342 for a couple of weeks -- in their dwellings. The latter are much
362 more solidly built than in the forest region, in order to offer suf-
313 ficient resistance against the force of the storms. The material for building as well as for heating consists of driftwood which is supplied by the river and even more by the ocean. Besides the
797 merchants, Boljkalák is also visited almost annually by a missionary, who holds services in the chapel here. Chitrow praises the devoutness of the people -- the outward signs of this did not remain unnoticed by us either.

554 On the day after our arrival the elder (stárosta) of the
292 Kangaláss Jakuten /Yakut/ appeared with fresh reindeer for the
123 return journey. He ranked higher than both the local elder and the one accompanying us and wore, as a mark of distinction, a sort of uniform, a yellowish gray cloth coat with red trimming
233 and a gold-embroidered belt with a short sword. The new reindeer, which had to be given a day of rest, and the previous ones